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REPEAT SEX OFFENDER SENTENCED TO LIFE IN PRISON

Montana man's history of committing sexual assaults on minors spans more than 25 years

WASHINGTON – A child sex offender with multiple prior convictions for offenses against children has been sentenced to life in prison on both counts for which he was convicted, to run concurrently, Assistant Attorney General Alice S. Fisher of the Criminal Division and Timothy J. Fuhrman, Special Agent in Charge of the FBI's Salt Lake City Division, announced today.

Ferlin Killsnight, 47, formerly of Lame Deer, Mont., pleaded guilty on Oct. 2, 2007, to two counts which charged him with knowingly transporting a minor and traveling in interstate commerce for the purpose of engaging in illicit sexual activity. In his guilty plea, Killsnight admitted that he transported a person he knew to be 16 years old from Billings, Mont. through Idaho to Seattle, Wash. and that he did so for the purpose of engaging in illicit sexual activity with the minor. Killsnight was indicted for these offenses by a federal grand jury in Billings on Sept. 20, 2006.

Killsnight's life sentences were mandated under federal law because of his long history of sexually assaulting minors. He was prosecuted under the federal recidivist child sex offender statute, which was enacted by Congress as part of the PROTECT Act. The provision mandates a life sentence for any person who is convicted of certain federal sex offenses against minors and has qualifying prior convictions for exploiting minors.

Court documents reflect that Killsnight has a record of committing sexual assaults on minors which spans more than 25 years. Among other things, Killsnight was convicted of third-degree rape in King County, Wash. in 1982, for forcibly raping a 15-year-old. In 1985, he was convicted of sexual assault in Monmouth County, N.J., for raping a sleeping 12-year-old. In 1993, he was convicted of custodial interference in Cascade County, Mont., for transporting a 16-year old from Elizabeth, N.J. to Montana and attempting to molest the minor along the way. After serving a 12-year sentence for his 1993 conviction (and for federal sexual assault convictions stemming from his molestation and rape of three other minors), Killsnight was released from federal prison on Sept. 13, 2005, less than two months before meeting the victim involved in the current prosecution.

The case against Killsnight was investigated by the Billings Field Office of the FBI and prosecuted by Trial Attorney Jill Trumbull-Harris of the Criminal Division's Child Exploitation and Obscenity Section.

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